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REPORT

TO THE

SENATE ON
SEVERAL WATERSHED PROPOSALS

SUBMITTED BY THE

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

FROM THE

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

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Introduction

This report seeks to fulfill the obligation of the Committee on Environment and Public Works to inform the Senate and the Executive Branch of initiatives taken by the Committee. Since 1978, the Committee has published periodic reports that explain in detail Committee actions on those projects that are authorized solely by Committee resolution.

General Statement

The authority for Soil Conservation Service small watershed plans is Public Law 83–566, the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954, as amended. Under the provisions of that Act, projects either costing over $5 million or those involving structures with a storage capacity of greater than 2,500 acre-feet must be approved by resolution by the appropriate House and Senate Committees.

These watershed protection projects fall into two categories: (1) plans involving a structure of greater than 4,000 acre-feet capacity require a resolution of approval by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and the House Committee on Public Works and Transportation; (2) plans involving structures of less than 4,000 acre-feet capacity are reviewed by the congressional agriculture committees.

The Committee on Environment and Public Works finds that each of the four Soil Conservation Service small watershed projects described in this report are needed and well designed. The Committee's approval of these projects reflects its recognition of the substantial support they have received from local organizations.

Although these four projects are considered meritorious, the Committee did discuss them in the context of a number of related issues. These included the SCS small watershed program itself and the broader issue of water policy. These issues, discussed below, remain unresolved. At a later date, the Committee plans to conduct detailed oversight on the entire small watershed program.

Project Costs

The Committee remains concerned over the rising costs of project construction. Of the four projects, the least amount of cost inflation was shown by the Upper Mud River Watershed plan: from $7.0 million in 1978 to $9.3 million in 1982. At the other extreme, the costs of the South Zumbro plan rose from $12.9 million in 1979 to $18.2 million in 1982. Costs appear certain to rise even more, since construction of these projects may not begin for at least a year or two. Although the solution to this problem is not clear in part because it is intimately related to larger economic issues, the Committee notes that inflation has and will continue to seriously affect water project decisions and schedules at both the local and national level.

Also, the Committee remains concerned about a system allowing full approval of these projects by simple Committee resolution. For example, the cost of the Little Calumet project exceeds $52 million (the Federal share is almost $38 million). Yet all U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects costing over $15 million must be approved by an Act of Congress.

Program Focus

The main intent of P.L. 83–566 was to provide watershed and flood protection as well as improved water management. For two of the present projects. Mozingo Creek and Upper Mud River, recreation is listed as the predominant benefit. The Committee questions whether recreation benefits should play a significant role in determining the economic viability of SCS projects, particularly in times of Federal fiscal austerity. In response to Committee questions about methods for determining project priorities, the Soil Conservation Service has responded that highest priority is given to projects whose primary purpos` is flood control and water management.

In the past the Committee has expressed concern that the small watershed programs' original emphasis on agricultural and rural areas has shifted. The present projects continue this trend. For the Little Calumet and South Zumbro projects, substantial portions of the flood control and recreation benefits accrue to urban populations.

Descriptions of Watershed Work Plans Approved in This Report

SOUTH ZUMBRO WATERSHED, MINNESOTA

The 200,540 acre South Zumbro Watershed is located in Olmstead and Dodge counties in southeastern Minnesota. The plan will provide flood protection, recreation, and watershed protection benefits. Principle aspects of the plan include soil conservation practices on farms and structural measures consisting of six flood prevention-recreation structures and associated recreation facilities. The total storage capacity of the structures is 12,772 acre-feet. The total project cost is $18,155,600, of which the Federal Government will pay 63 percent. The benefit-cost radio is 1.4 to 1, using a 7⅜ percent discount rate.

	Average annual dollars (7⅜ percent, 100 yr)	
	Benefit	Cost
Annual benefits and costs:		
Flood prevention	1,318,400	799,200
Recreation	280,100	178,500
OM&R and project administration	NA	198,100
Total	1,598,500	1,175,800

	Public Law 566 funds		Other funds		Total dollars
	Dollars	Percent	Dollars	Percent	
Capital costs:					
Land treatment measures	809,500	25	2,422,700	75	3,232,200
Environmental quality	0	0	357,000	100	357,000
Structural measures:					
Flood prevention	8,411,000	78	2,416,600	22	10,827,600
Recreation	1,136,800	47	1,281,400	53	2,418,200
Project administration	1,124,600	85	196,000	15	1,320,600
Total	11,481,900	63	6,673,700	37	18,155,600

In addition to the Soil Conservation Service work described above, the South Zumbro watershed plan includes work to be done by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps will be involved in channel work, levee construction, alteration of bridges, sewers, and utilities, and a river walkway corridor system. Although the Corps' part of the project increases the flood control and recreation benefits to the watershed area, the construction of the SCS project and its associated benefits are independent of the Corps' project and should proceed whether or not the Corps project is authorized.

LITTLE CALUMET RIVER WATERSHED, ILLINOIS

The Little Calumet watershed encompasses a 136,500-acre area in Cook and Will counties, Illinois. The project benefits are flood protection, recreation, and watershed protection. Principle project measures are soil conservation practices, non-structural flood proofing and channel maintenance, three excavated floodwater retarding structures, one multiple-purpose floodwater retarding-recreation structure with associated recreation facilities, and 2 miles of channel work. The total storage capacity of the structures is 12,408 acre-feet. Total project cost is $52,472,100, of which the Federal Government will pay 72 percent. The benefit-cost ratio is 1.5 to 1, using a 7⅜ percent discount rate.

	Average annual dollars (7⅜ percent, 100 yr)	
	Benefit	Cost
Annual benefits and costs:		
Flood prevention	5,464,800	3,247,600
Recreation	251,700	132,900
OM&R and project administration	NA	452,700
Total	5,716,500	3,902,200

	Public Law 566 funds		Other funds		Total dollars
	Dollars	Percent	Dollars	Percent	
Capital costs:					
Land treatment measures	1,311,000	42	1,810,000	58	3,121,000
Structural measures:					
Flood prevention	33,880,000	77	10,120,000	23	44,000,000
Recreation	648,000	36	1,152,000	64	1,800,000
Nonstructural measures	0	0	891,300	100	891,300
Project administration	1,994,800	75	665,000	25	2,659,800
Total	37,833,800	72	14,638,300	28	52,472,100

MOZINGO CREEK WATERSHED, MISSOURI

The Mozingo Creek watershed consists of 23,988 acres in Nodaway County in northwestern Missouri. The planned project will yield recreation, municipal and industrial water supply, flood prevention, and watershed protection benefits. Principle features of the project are soil conservation practices on farms, four grade-stabilization structures and one multiple purpose structure with associated recreation facilities. The structures' storage capacity is 25,183 acre-feet. Total project cost is $14,898,000, of which the Federal Government will pay 31 percent. The benefit-cost ratio is 1.3 to 1, using a 7⅜ percent discount rate.

	Average annual dollars (7⅜ percent, 100 yr)	
	Benefit	Cost
Annual benefits and costs:		
Flood prevention	107,600	104,500
Recreation	1,236,000	562,800
Water supply	338,600	252,600
OM&R and project administration	NA	380,700
Total	1,682,200	1,300,600

	Public Law 566 funds		Other funds		Total dollars
	Dollars	Percent	Dollars	Percent	
Capital costs:					
Land treatment measures	737,500	52	686,500	48	1,424,000
Structural measures:					
Flood prevention	1,370,300	97	45,000	3	1,415,300
Recreation	2,162,000	28	5,462,800	72	7,624,800
M&I water supply	9,500	.....	3,412,800	.....	3,422,300
Project administration	332,800	33	678,800	67	1,011,600
Total	4,612,100	31	10,285,900	69	14,898,00

UPPER MUD RIVER WATERSHED, WEST VIRGINIA

The 61,600 acre Upper Mud River watershed is located in Lincoln and Boone counties in southwestern West Virginia. Plan benefits will be flood prevention, recreation, and watershed protection. Non-structural measures consist of land treatment on farms and structural measures consist of one flood-water retarding dam associated with a multiple-purpose reservoir for flood protection and recreation, plus recreation facilities. Total storage capacity of the structure is 15,410 acre-feet. The total project cost is $9,315,400, of which the Federal Government will pay 47 percent. The benefit-cost ratio is 1.04 to 1, using a 7⅜ percent discount rate.

	Average annual dollars (7⅜ percent, 100 yr)	
	Benefit	Cost
Annual benefits and costs:		
Flood prevention	291,600	234,700
Recreation	329,600	285,900
OM&R and project administration	NA	76,000
Total	621,200	596,600

	Public Law 566 funds		Other funds		Total dollars
	Dollars	Percent	Dollars	Percent	
Capital costs:					
Land treatment	525,400	28	1,322,600	72	1,848,000
Structural measurers:					
Flood prevention	1,499,200	47	1,680,500	53	3,179,700
Recreation	1,970,500	51	1,903,400	49	3,873,900
Project administration	402,200	97	11,600	3	413,800
Total	4,397,300	47	4,918,100	53	9,315,400

COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS

[97th Congress, 2d Session]

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

Resolved by the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the United States Senate, That pursuant to the provisions of Section 2 of Public Law 566, Eighty-third Congress, as amended, by Public Law 1018, Eighty-fourth Congress, the project for recreation, municipal and industrial water supply, flood prevention and watershed protection benefits in the Mozingo Creek Watershed, Nodaway County, Missouri, is hereby approved substantially in accordance with the report of the Soil Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture, dated September 1978, with the conditions that (1) the approval of appropriations for the project be limited to $4,612,000 the estimated Federal cost of the project as shown in the work plan for such project updated to current price levels, plus or minus such amounts, if any, as may be justified by reason of ordinary fluctuation in the cost of construction as indicated by engineering cost indexes applicable to the type of construction involved; and (2) the purposes served by the project shall be those set forth in the watershed work plan submitted for the project and the scope of the project purposes and of the project shall be substantially as set forth in such work plan.

ROBERT T. STAFFORD,
Chairman.
JENNINGS RANDOLPH,
Ranking Minority Member.

Adopted: August 11, 1982.

[97th Congress, 2d Session]

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

Resolved by the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the United States Senate, That pursuant to the provisions of Section 2 of Public Law 566, Eighty-third Congress, as amended, by Public Law 1018, Eighty-fourth Congress, the project for flood protection, recreation, and watershed protection in the Little Calumet River Watershed, Cook and Will Counties, Illinois, is hereby approved substantially in accordance with the record of the Soil Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture, dated November 1978, with the conditions that

(1) the approval of appropriations for the project be limited to $37,833,800 the estimated Federal cost of the project as shown in the work plan for such project updated to current price levels, plus or minus such amounts, if any, as may be justified by reason of ordinary fluctuation in the cost of construction as indicated by engineering cost indexes applicable to the type of construction involved; and (2) the purposes served by the project shall be those set forth in the watershed work plan submitted for the project and the scope of the project purposes and of the project shall be substantially as set forth in such work plan.

ROBERT T. STAFFORD,
Chairman.
JENNINGS RANDOLPH,
Ranking Minority Member.

Adopted: August 11, 1982.

[97th Congress, 2d Session]

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

Resolved by the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the United States Senate, That pursuant to the provisions of Section 2 of Public Law 566, Eighty-third Congress, as amended, by Public Law 1018, Eighty-fourth Congress, the project for flood prevention, recreation, and watershed protection, in the Upper Mud River Watershed, Lincoln and Boone Counties, West Virginia, is hereby approved substantially in accordance with the report of the Soil Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture, dated June 1979 with the conditions that (1) the approval of appropriations for the project be limited to $4,397,300 the estimated Federal cost of the project as shown in the work plan for such project updated to current price levels, plus or minus such amounts, if any, as may be justified by reason of ordinary fluctuation in the cost of construction as indicated by engineering cost indexes applicable to the type of construction involved; and (2) the purposes served by the project shall be those set forth in the watershed work plan submitted for the project and the scope of the project purposes and of the project shall be substantially as set forth in such work plan.

ROBERT T. STAFFORD,
Chairman.
JENNINGS RANDOLPH,
Ranking Minority Member.

Adopted: August 11, 1982.

[97th Congress, 2d Session]

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

Resolved by the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the United States Senate, That pursuant to the provisions of Section 2 of Public Law 566, Eighty-third Congress, as amended, by Public Law 1018, Eighty-fourth Congress, the project for flood prevention, recreation, and watershed protection, in the South Zumbro Watershed, Olmstead and Dodge Counties, Minnesota, is hereby approved substantially in accordance with the report of the Soil Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture, dated April 1978 with the conditions that (1) the approval of appropriations for the project be limited to $11,481,900 the estimated Federal cost of the project as shown in the work plan for such project updated to current price levels, plus or minus such amounts, if any, as may be justified by reason of ordinary fluctuation in the cost of construction as indicated by engineering cost indexes applicable to the type of construction involved; and (2) the purposes served by the project shall be those set forth in the watershed work plan submitted for the project and the scope of the project purposes and of the project shall be substantially as set forth in such work plan.

ROBERT T. STAFFORD,
Chairman.
JENNINGS RANDOLPH,
Ranking Minority Member.

Adopted: August 11, 1982.

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